

Stevenson, William
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 A Man Called
 Intrepid

The Intrepid Connection And 'Fatty's Big Surprise'

By Christopher Dickey

The British master spy code-named Intrepid lives in Bermuda overlooking the sea. An investor and millionaire industrialist, he was Churchill's leading intelligence officer in World War II, running his clandestine operations out of an office in New York City. A confidante and adviser to President Franklin Roosevelt, he became the godfather of the OSS and CIA, and a knight. Before all that he was a lightweight boxing champion and World War I air ace. But at 61, though he greets visitors as if he were a young man, even that much activity, it is said, puts a strain on him. He has trouble swallowing and subsists on a diet of champagne and soft eggs.

His network of spies and contacts, responsible for some of the most daring and valuable clandestine efforts in the history of espionage, was al-

ways composed of brilliant amateurs. Men like Roald Dahl and Noel Coward served him. His own memory is phenomenal—recalling conversations decades old, file numbers of memos secreted away years before. He keeps track of his old friends. In his office is his personal telex machine over which he sends cryptic messages around the world and receives information that many governments would envy.

Journalist William Stevenson is the biographer of Intrepid, whose real name, confusingly enough, is Sir William Stephenson. His book, "A Man called Intrepid," is a best seller. He is also a personal friend of the great spy and has spent a good deal of time down in Bermuda talking world affairs and drinking champagne.

On July 3, when he received a telex

message from Intrepid that told him "Fatty is in for a big surprise," Stevenson thought back on conversations they'd had the week before about the hostages terrorists were holding at Uganda's Entebbe airport. "Fatty" would be President Amin; the surprise would be an Israeli raid.

This advance notice long before most of the world was informed, helped Stevenson set in plans with Bantam Books of New York to produce an instant paperback about the Entebbe rescue mission. It turned out that an Israeli publisher had a similar idea and contacted Bantam. A deal was struck, and within four days Stevenson was on his way to Tel Aviv with the idea that he would revise and adapt literal translations of the Israeli writer's material. But he soon found himself rewriting it, and then doing his own research.

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